GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3137
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2016
Haj Pilgrimage
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of pilgrims who undertook the Haj pilgrimage during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the financial and other assistance provided for undertaking the pilgrimage smoothly;

(c) whether members from the same family can avail Government facilities several times; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) The number of pilgrims who proceeded for Haj during the last three years are as follows:

Year Number of Pilgrims proceeded for Haj
2013 135,938
2014 135,914
2015 135,868

(b) The expenditure towards Haj is borne by the pilgrims themselves. No financial assistance is given directly to Haj pilgrims. However, Ministry of Civil Aviation provides subsidy for air travel to pilgrims going for Haj through the Haj Committee of India.

Ministry of External Affairs coordinates arrangements for Haj pilgrimage in consultation with the Haj Committee of India and the Consulate General of India (CGI), Jeddah. Every year, MEA sends deputationists (Coordinators, Assistant Haj Officers, Haj Assistants, Doctors and paramedical staff) for rendering assistance to the Haj pilgrims. Every year, CGI, Jeddah arranges for temporary tents in Mina, sets up branch Haj Offices and dispensaries in Makkah and Madinah, provides medicines, ambulances, other local transport etc. for the Haj pilgrims.

Ministry of Civil Aviation supervises the Air charter operations during Haj period and deploys officials in Saudi Arabia to assist in embarkation and disembarkation of pilgrims.

To provide better facilities and amenities for Haj pilgrims, several initiatives have been undertaken. These include: improvement of amenities for Haj pilgrims in buildings in Makkah and Madinah; strengthening of medical services for Haj pilgrims, streamlining of air travel arrangements for Hajis by ensuring effective management of timely arrival and departure of flights, online submission of Haj application form to Haj Committee of India and providing e-payment option to pilgrims, provision of local sim cards; provision of travel by metro train in Mashaer region for pilgrims going through HCOI ; 24 X 7 helpline, toll free number and use of Whatsapp and SMS for providing timely information; use of Mobile phone Application- "Indian Hajis Accommodation Locator" with information for Indian pilgrims; speedy and effective online complaint management system; strengthening of transport arrangements for Hajis accommodated in Azizia.

(c) & (d) In terms of Haj Policy 2013-17 framed by the Government in accordance with the judgment of Supreme Court dated 16.04.2013, an individual can perform Haj through Haj Committee of India (HCoI) only "once in a life time". However, a Repeater pilgrim is eligible as a Mehram of a female pilgrim or companion of age 70+ pilgrim, if no other Mehram/ Companion (who has not performed Haj through HCoI) is available and if he/she pays full airfare as decided by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.